

Thematic issue in the series “Borders in perspective” of the  
UniGR-Center for Border Studies (UniGR-CBS)

## **Identities and Methodologies of Border Studies: Recent Empirical and Conceptual Approaches**

Edited by Christian Wille | Dominik Gerst | Hannes Krämer

### **Abstract**

Considering the recent political and societal developments in Europe, the interdisciplinary endeavor of border studies has been both challenged and gained meaning more than ever before, which can be seen in the field’s growing institutionalization. On the one hand, this raises questions concerning its possibilities and limits and thus the identities of the field. While border studies are deeply interdisciplinary, the question of what specific disciplines can contribute to an integrated understanding of borders, how insights can be fruitfully related and how border studies as such are related to other research domains are an ongoing concern.

On the other hand, we can observe a significant lack of systematic and comparative reflections on the methodological foundations and consequences of border studies. Despite the increasing number of case studies on different borders across the world and the deepening of theoretical and conceptual thoughts, the relationship of epistemological perspectives, choice of research methods, reflections on the research process and the role of the researchers, assumptions about the heuristic use of theories, reflections on types of data and their explanatory power etc. have been usually addressed *en passant*.

Finally, understandings of borders as phenomena and research objects have been continuously diversified. Developments in research such as the overcoming of simplistic geopolitical perspectives by cultural and social science approaches, the decentralization of the border in favor of taking into account multi-scalar processes of b/ordering and othering and the complexification of the border both as a phenomenon and as a scientific viewpoint have widened the scope of interesting phenomena, empirical resources and conceptual avenues.

The special issue treats these developments as an opportunity for a long- overdue self-examination and asks for current identities and methodologies of border studies. For that the plural already inherent in the word *Studies* is being taken seriously, the collection of papers brings together conceptual and empirical accounts related to the question of the status quo of border studies as a field in its own right, thereby assessing its theoretical, methodological and empirical foundations and resources.

